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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this book is to identify and describe the most important factors that must be considered in making decisions about the optimal ways to provide access to information: the best ways to use the humans, machines, and intangible resources known as information, especially at the organizational level. It provides a framework for decision-makers to review information services within their organization. The book asks and then answers questions such as: How should organizations define their core information services?; How can costs be controlled?; Should we buy and keep information or should we contract for it as needed?; and Is it feasible to contract out whole library operations? Entire units of libraries and information centers are defined and untangled so that the broadest varieties of organizations can analyze their own environments. Each chapter is accompanied by comments from a broad range of experts in the information field. The first two chapters explain how information services and systems function within an organization and how this kind of work can be handled in-house or contracted out. The next two chapters describe the complexities of the information world--the information resources and technologies themselves. In each of these chapters, advice is provided on issues such as cost-benefit analysis, the pros and cons of outsourcing, and other issues such as ownership versus pay-as-you-go procurement. With collaborative ventures providing more opportunities for sharing of systems, services, and resources, a chapter is devoted to the issues, problems, and benefits of cooperative use of information systems and services. Then, prior to a review of future trends, there is a chapter devoted to fiscal issues--costing, pricing, internal charge-backs, and the dilemma of how to get 'hard' information about 'soft' services. Chapters are: "In-house Information Services"; "Information Workers"; "Resources, Services and Delivery"; "Information Technologies"; "Shared or Cooperative Routes"; "Costs and Charging Strategies"; and "Shaping Core Services in Future." (Contains 68 references.) (MAS)